

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRETOR 03718 301521Z

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AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LUANDA

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USMISSION USUN NY

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRETORIA 3718

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: WA, OTRA

SUBJ: VISIT TO SOUTH WEST AFRICA (NAMIBIA)

1. POLOFFS MUNN AND TIERNEY VISITED SWA SEPT 21 THRU 26,
GOING FROM WINDHOEK NORTH TO GROOTFONTEIN, TSUMEB, OSHAKATI,
RUACANA AND RETURNING WINDHOEK. DETAILS COMING BY AIRGRAM.
FOLLOWING SUMMARIZES PRINCIPAL OBSERVATIONS.

2. CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE: NOTHING BEYOND DECLARATION
OF INTENT WAS DISCUSSED AT INITIAL MEETINGS. BOTH BLACK
AND WHITE REPS SEEM TO BELIEVE SECRECY OF PROCEEDINGS AND
USE OF CONSENSUS WILL BE ESSENTIAL TO HAMMER OUT VIABLE
FRAMEWORK FOR INDEPENDENCE. PROCESS EXPECTED TO TAKE
BETTER PART THREE YEARS. AGENDA FOR MEETINGS TO RESUME
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 PRETOR 03718 301521Z

NOV 3 NOT RPT NOT DRAWN UP YET. INITIAL MEETINGS WILL

BE USED TO ESTABLISH SUB-COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUPS TO STUDY DETAILED ASPECTS AND MOST EXPECT FOCUS FURST ON ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS. WHITE DELEGATION, ORIGINALLY TWO, WILL BE EXPANDED TO INCLUDE MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF SWA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY, LARGELY TO PROVIDE MANPOWER ADEQUATE TO HAVE REPS ON EACH SUB-COMMITTEE. WHITE VERKRAMpte VAN ZIJL ASSURED LEGISLATORS THAT RESULT WOULD NOT BE UNITARY STATE, NOR INVOLVE ONE-MAN-ONE-VOTE SYSTEM, BUT HE PRIVATELY INDICATED OPTIMISM THAT WORKABLE FEDERAL SYSTEM WOULD EMERGE. EVEN HE FELT IT INEVITABLE THAT SOME POWER-SHARING SYSTEM WOULD HAVE TO BE DESIGNED. NNC AND SWAPO CONTINUE TO CHALLENGE PROCEEDINGS. MOST CONTACTS FELT THAT INTERNAL SWAPO MORE MODERATE AND DEDICATED TO PEACEFUL SOLUTION THAN EXTERNAL SWAPO, MANY OF WHOM LACK FINE TUNED PERCEPTION OF REALITIES. NNC SEEMS INCREASINGLY ACCEPTED AS MOST LIKELY TO HAVE INFLUENCE, BUT MODALITY OF POSSIBLE PARTICIPATION NOT BEING ADDRESSED YET. SW WHITE NATIONALISTS HAVE ATTEMPTED ARRANGE PRIVATE OFF-RECORD MEETINGS WITH NNC LEADERSHIP. THOUGH NNC OFFICIAL TJONGERERO DENIES SUCH CONTACTS, LARGEY BECAUSE NNC FEARFUL OF BEING CHARGED WITH SOME KIND OF SECRET SELL-OUT, OTHERS SAY SOME MEETINGS HAVE TAKEN PLACE AND MORE WILL. VISIT OF CONFERENCE DELEGATES TO US, BRITAIN AND GERMANY HAS ITS MOROUS SIDE. ORIGINALLY IT APPEARS THAT COMMISSIONER DE WET PROMISED OWAMBO, KAVANGO AND CAPRIVI REPS A PLEASANT VACATION IN WEST, BUT WHEN OTHERS HEARD OF TRIP, DELEGATIONS, BACKED UP BY MUDGE AND MARAIS, INSISTED ON HAVING REPS GO TOO, THUS BOOSTING GROUP TO AROUND 33 (SEPTELS FOR DETAIL). PURPOSE WILL NOW BE TO CONVINCE OTHERS THAT CONFERENCE REPS REALLY DO SPEAK FOR THEIR RESPECTIVE PEOPLES AND INTEND DEVELOP WORKABLE INDEPENDENT STATE. AT SAME TIME DELEGATES WILL GAIN EXPOSURE TO OUTSIDE WORLD, AND OUTSIDERS WILL HAVE CHANCE TO DISCOVER FIRST HAND THE DIMENSIONS OF SOME PROBLEMS FACING SWA AS A WHOLE.

3. DETENTIONS: ACCORDING TO VARIOUS SOURCES, NUMBER OF PERSONS DETAINED IN NAMIBIA SINCE ASSASSINATION OF OWAMBO CHIEF MINISTER ELIFAS IS APPROXIMATELY THIRTY, OF WHOM ABOUT TWENTY WERE ARRESTED IN OVAMBOLAND. TWO DETAINEES CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 PRETOR 03718 301521Z

(PASTORS KAMEETA AND NAHOLO) HAVE BEEN RELEASED UNCHARGED, BUT SOME ADDITIONAL DETENTIONS ARE OCCURRING. SOME CONTACTS REPORT 8 TO 15 OTHER BLACKS SEEM TO BE MISSING, BUT MAY HAVE FLED OR BE IN HIDING. DETAINEES ARE IMPRISONED AT SCATTERED LOCATIONS AND ARE BEING HELD INCOMMUNICADO UNDER TERRORISM ACT IN THE SOUTH AND PROCLAMATION R17 IN OWAMBO. MINJUSTICE KRUGER TOLD NATNGNAL PARTY CONGRESS IN WINDHOEK SEPT 24 THAT SOME DETAINEES WILL BE BROUGHT

TO COURT "IN TWO OR THREE WEEKS" IN CONNECTION WITH ASSASSINATION.

4. ANGOLAN REFUGEES: LOCAL OFFICIALS ESTIMATE THERE ARE CURRENTLY 2000 REFUGEES IN CAMP AT GROOTFONTEIN AND 1600 AT TSUMEB. CAMP AT OSHAKATI WHICH WAS USED BASICALLY AS STAGING AREA IS NOW CLOSED. REFUGEES AT TSUMEB AND GROOTFONTEIN ARE BEING TRANSPORTED BY RAIL TO WALVIS BAY AS QUICKLY AS ARRANGEMENTS CAN BE MADE TO ACCOMMODATE THEM ON SHIPS TO RETURN THEM TO PORTUGAL. SA HANDLING OF REFUGEE OPERATIONS IS IMPRESSIVE. ONLY COMPLAINT REFUGEES SEEM TO HAVE IS THAT THEY ARE BEING SENT TO PORTUGAL. POLICE OFFICIALS AT TSUMEB CAMP SAID THEY HAD HEARD VERY FEW FIRST-HAND STORIES OF ANY FORM OF MOLESTATION OF PORTUGUESE ANGOLANS BY BLACKS, AND ATTRIBUTED LARGE-SCALE FLIGHT MORE TO PURE PANIC THAN TO DIRECT DANGER. SOUTH AFRICANS ARE NO LONGER ALLOWING PORTUGUESE ANGOLANS TO ENTER SWA, BUT SOME ANGOLAN OVAMBOS CONTINUE TO DRIFT SOUTHWARD. FOOD SEEMS TO BE INCREASINGLY SERIOUS PROBLEM IN AREAS ADJACENT TO SWA BORDER.

5. MILITARY: SCATTERING OF ARMED SOLDIERS OBSERVED IN WINDHOEK AREA BUT ATMOSPHERE NOT RPT NOT ONE OF TENSION. REINFORCEMENTS SENT INTO SWA AS CONSEQUENCE ELIFAS MURDER. ARMY SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN HEAVY-HANDED IN EARLY SEARCH PROCEDURES, AND THIS RESULTED IN PERCEPTEBLE DETERIORATION OF RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACKS AND MILITARY IN OWAMBO AREAS WHICH EARLIER HAD BEEN QUITE GOOD IN CONTRAST TO THOSE WITH POLICE. IN BORDER AREA, CHIEF ENGINEER THOMPSON (AUSTRALIAN) AT RUACANA PROJECT SAID HE HAD INITIATED CALL FOR TROOPS WHEN UNITA BROUGHT ABOUT 30 ARMED MEN INTO CALUENQUE APPROXIMATELY AUG 9 AND ANNOUNCED THAT EIGHT PROJECT ENGINEERS THEN COMMUTING BETWEEN CALUENQUE AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 PRETOR 03718 301521Z

RUACANA WOULD BE HELD HOSTAGE. SA OCCUPATION OF PROJECT AREA AT RUACANA INVOLVED FEW HUNDRED SQUARE METERS WHERE CONSTRUCTION WORK IN PROGRESS ON BOTH SIDES OF ACTUAL FRONTIER. TWO OR THREE SMALL OBSERVATION POSTS WERE OBSERVED ON RIVER'S EDGE, SOUTH SIDE, BOTH ABOVE AND BELOW PROJECT, MANNED BY ABOUT 3 MEN EACH. IN CENTER OF AREA EXJDCY ON BORDER SA TROOPS HAVE USED ONE BUILDING WITH COURTYARD AS STRONGPOINT, WITH SOME DIRT AND SAND BAG PROTECTIVE REVETMENTS THROWN UP. APPROXIMATELY 80 TO 100 SOLDIERS OBSERVED IN AREA, NONE ACTUALLY CARRYING ARMS OUTSIDE OPS, ATMOSPHERE VERY RELAXED, AND TRAFFIC ACROSS BORDER GATE SEEMED TO FLOW WITHOUT VISIBLE INTERRUPTION. THOMPSON SAID ABOUT ONE COMPANY NOW STATIONED AT CALUENQUE, AND INVITED VISIT THERE, BUT THIS DECLINED. THOMPSON SAID THERE HAD NEVER BEEN ANY FIGHTING AT THESE TWO POINTS, AND

NO INCIDENTS. MOST SERIOUS PROBLEM WAS THAT FLOW OF FOOD-STUFFS, TIMBER, CEMENT AND OTHER MATERIAL FROM ANGOLAN SOURCES HAS NOW ALMOST COMPLETELY DRIED UP, AND SWA AUTHORITIES NOW EXAMINING REQUESTS FROM LOCAL ANGOLAN SIDE FOR HELP IN THESE DEPARTMENTS.

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